

REMARKS

We are in receipt of the Office Action dated June 27, 2003, and the above amendment and following remarks are made in light thereof.

Claims 1-73 are pending in the application, with claims 1-45 having been withdrawn from consideration pursuant to a restriction requirement. New claims 74-94 are being added pursuant to the present amendment.

Pursuant to the Office Action, the examiner has objected to the abstract and, in response thereto, an amended abstract is presented herewith. In addition the examiner objects to the title of the invention. A new title is provided pursuant to this amendment.

Turning to the substantive aspects of the Office Action, the examiner rejects claims 46-73 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hemsath et al. 5,997,286.

Hemsath et al. is directed to combined thermal and chemical treatment of metal articles. In contrast, the invention called for in claims 46-73 is directed to a heat treatment process in manufacturing of semiconductor film.

Applicant believes that the pending claims distinguish over Hemsath et al. With respect to claims 50 and 54, these claims fully distinguish over Hemsath et al., as Hemsath et al. does not teach or suggest the claimed feature of “using a heat treatment means formed in combination with heat generating means[,] and a heat absorber for absorbing thermal radiation from the heat generating means”. Dependent claims 51-53 and 55-57 distinguish over Hemsath et al. for the same reasons.

With respect to claim 58, Hemsath et al. does not teach or suggest the claim feature of “heating the gas expelled from the first processing chamber by using second gas heat treatment means; [and] supplying the heated gas to a second processing chamber”. Independent claim 62 and dependent claims 59-61 and 63-65 distinguish over

Hemsath et al. for the same reasons.

With respect to claims 66, Hemsath et al. does not teach or suggest the claim features of “a heat treatment period for supplying the heated gas to a second processing chamber” and “a cooling period for cooling the substrate disposed in the processing chamber”. Independent claim 70 and dependent claims 67-69 and 71-73 distinguish over Hemsath et al. for the same reason.


Accordingly, applicant contends that claims 46-73 are not obvious in view of Hemsath et al. Please note the claims 46, 58, 62, 66 and 70 are amended only for the sake of clarity. Claims 50 and 54 also include a clarifying amendment in addition to requiring use of “a heat treatment means formed in combination with” heat generating means.

New claims 74-94 are all dependent claims, and thus should be allowable over Hemsath et al. for the same reasons as the presently pending claims.

Accordingly, applicant believes that the claims are in condition for allowance, and an early Office Action in this regard is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: December 4, 2003



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